

CHRIST In The Psalms

by

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*All things must be fulfilled, which were written . . .
in the Psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:44)*

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The Thirty-First Psalm

"Who, for the joy was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2).

Psalms 31

1. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.
2. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.
3. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.
4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.
5. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.
6. I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord.
7. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;
8. And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.
9. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.
10. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.
11. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.
12. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.
13. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel

together against me, they devised to take away my life.

14. But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God.

15. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.

17. Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.

18. Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

19. Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

20. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

21. Blessed be the Lord: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

22. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

23. O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

24. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

The New Testament identification of the Thirty-first Psalm as Messianic is shown by the quotation of a part of the fifth verse in Luke 23:46:

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46). Now, we read in verse 5 of Psalm 31, "**Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.**" For reasons that were important to the HOLY SPIRIT, He saw that the verb "commit" from the Old Testament would be changed to "commend" in the New Testament.

The Psalm brings before us our LORD's exercise of soul in connection with the grief and shame characterizing His earthly life. We have thought too little of this as we have considered the pathway from Bethlehem to Calvary, which was in all its length "a way of sorrows." There was not only a cross at the end of the way, but there was shame all the way: **"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"** (Hebrews 12:2).

Have you ever tried to visualize the life of JESUS of Nazareth before the days of His public ministry?

Nazareth was a little town, whose neighbors said that nothing good could come out of it: **"And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see"** (John 1:46). In this little despised village there was a carpenter named Joseph with his wife Mary and a family of sons and daughters. The eldest of these children, named JESUS, was also a carpenter **"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him"** (Mark 6:3).

But this JESUS the carpenter had been born without benefit of a human father. His mother Mary acknowledged this, and declared that her son had been born while she was a virgin, and that he had no human father whatsoever. Joseph, Mary's husband, confirmed this testimony, declaring that he himself was not the boy's father, and that by divine revelation he had been assured that the boy had no human father:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" (Matthew 1:18-25).

Both Joseph and Mary testified that JESUS was the Messiah of Israel, of whom it had been predicted in Isaiah 7:14 that He should be born of a virgin.

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

This was the testimony of both Joseph and Mary, but no one believed it. We read in the Word of GOD that not even His own brethren believed on Him:

"For neither did his brethren believe in him" (John 7:5).

Even they refused to credit the testimony of their father and mother concerning the virgin birth of the Firstborn in the family.

It is easy to see then what they did believe. They believed what the neighbors believed, and what everybody in Nazareth believed, apart from Joseph and Mary and JESUS Himself. They believed that JESUS was the illegitimate son of a man and woman who denied the fact.

This was the atmosphere surrounding the young man named JESUS of Nazareth. The language of our Psalm gives us a vivid picture of the circumstances in which He grew up. He was thrust upon GOD by these circumstances and had sweet communion continuously with Him:

"In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room" (Psalm 31:1-8).

But His was a sensitive spirit, and His life was spent with grief, and His years with sighing: "**For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed**" (Psalm 31:10).

A difficulty confronts us in the tenth verse, as we read, "**my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.**" How could He thus speak to GOD when He had no iniquity of His own?

Some readers of the Psalm will turn from it and say that it is not Messianic because of this confession of sin. But there are other Psalms, whose Messianic character cannot be controverted, in which the same difficulty presents itself. We find in the Messianic Psalms our LORD frequently confessing sin. This truly presents a problem, but the solution of the problem is in the fact that He identified Himself throughout His life, as well as in His death, with us sinners, and confessed our sins as His own.

It is true that atonement for our sins was wrought out on the Cross of Calvary alone. But it is also true that the suffering He endured on the way to the Cross would never have been His had He not been travelling in that way. He had become incarnate in order that He might die for our sins, and this incarnation brought Him into such fellowship with man and man's sin that it can well be said, not only that He bore them in His own body unto the tree. Let it be said again, that atonement for sin was only while He hung on the Cross, but there was much suffering before the atonement, and this suffering was because He had come into the world to save sinners.

May our hearts go out to Him in a new way as we read the language of verses 11-13:

"I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life."

In verses 14-18 He again rolls Himself upon GOD in perfect trust:

"But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake. Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously

against the righteous."

and in verses 19-24 He rejoices in His Father's goodness, and exhorts the saints to love the LORD: "**Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.** Blessed be the Lord: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. **O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.**"

It is true that in Luke 2:52, it is written that "**Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.**" His favor of GOD, of course, continued, but His favor with man was short-lived, and when at the beginning of His public ministry He returned to His home town and preached to His old neighbors, they were so enraged with Him that they "**rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong**" (Luke 4:29). They sought in their rage to put Him to death!

None of us can fully appreciate the terrible things endured by our LORD during the thirty-three years of the days of His flesh.

Of course none of us knows anything about His personal appearance. Many artists have attempted to depict His features for us, but they do not agree among themselves as to what He looked like, and none of us can tell. In Isaiah 52:14, in the midst of a passage manifestly applying to our LORD, it is written that "**His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.**" And while it may be true, as Dr. Scofield suggests, that this marred visage was "the effect of the brutalities described in Matthew 26:67-68; 27:27-30" (Scofield Reference Bible), we cannot be sure even of that - (see The Scourging Of CHRIST for more detail).

Let us go into the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and let us examine again this graphic picture of the CHRIST of GOD, written by the HOLY SPIRIT of Truth, seven hundred years before the Son of GOD became the Son of man. here we find Him described as "**a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not**" (vss. 2-3).

This man from Heaven was so despised and rejected of His fellowmen that they hid their faces from Him. They esteemed "**him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,**" and did not know that all this suffering was in their behalf (vss. 4-6).

Surely, it ought to make us love Him more when we are reminded of all these things He bore that He might finally take away our sins! His enemies flung into His face the suggestion that He was

"born of fornication" (John 8:41). And men wearing the livery of Heaven today and masquerading as ministers of righteousness are flinging the same slander into His face. We have come to know Him as the One who, for the joy that was set before Him in bringing many sons unto glory, was willing to endure the cross and to despise the shame, and that He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, able to save to the end all who come to GOD by Him, since He ever liveth to make intercession for them!

Blessed, indeed, are all they that put their trust in Him!

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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